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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Attorney General applauds passage of HB2091 – Human Smuggling Bill

(Phoenix, Ariz. – May 26, 2004) Attorney General Terry Goddard applauded the passage of HB2091 by the Arizona legislature. The legislation is an effort to curtail the human smuggling activity in Arizona.

Currently, Arizona is experiencing a rising number of extortion incidents, kidnappings and home invasions as a result of human smuggling/coyote activities. It is estimated that more than \$320 million per year is transacted in Phoenix alone to pay for coyote activity. Some groups can make \$40,000 in a week.

This bill targets coyote violence by taking some of the profit out of human smuggling conduct in Arizona. Under the new provisions adopted in this bill, the Attorney General's Office now has an additional tool to crack down on coyote trafficking by seizing the smugglers' assets such as vehicles, safe houses, and bank accounts.

"Kidnapping, rape and murder are becoming more commonplace as Arizona experiences a dramatic increase in human smuggling," Goddard said. "This legislation provides a tool to get at the coyote factions by taking away their assets."

Senator Linda Aguirre and Representative Michele Reagan helped move the amendment through the legislature.

"Our community sees the devastation by coyote activity every day," Aguirre said. "I ran the amendment to stop the violence and the abuse our neighborhoods are beginning to experience on a daily basis."

"We have to do all we can at the state level to prevent the illegal trafficking of human beings through Arizona," Reagan said. "This bill allows the Attorney General's Office to go after the worst of the worst."

The bill now goes to Governor Napolitano for signature.

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